

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of the County Executive



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 19, 2013

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County Executive Announces Appointment of Acting Director of Department of Emergency Services

Russell J. Strickland to take helm of new department

(Bel Air, MD) - - Harford County Executive David R. Craig has announced that Russell J. Strickland has been appointed as the Acting Director of the newly established Department of Emergency Services. Strickland must be confirmed by the Harford County Council to serve as the Director of the cabinet level department.

Prior to his appointment as Acting Director of the Department of Emergency Services, Strickland has served as Manager of the Harford County Division of Emergency Operations since September 2012.

"I am pleased to announce the selection of Russ Strickland to serve as the Acting Director of the Department of Emergency Services and have forwarded his nomination to the Harford County Council for confirmation," County Executive Craig said. "Russell brings to the position years of professional and volunteer service with the Maryland fire and rescue service and has a strong background in executive level leadership," Craig remarked.

Strickland began his career in public safety in the early 1970's as a part-time clerk and dispatcher with the Elkton Police Department in Cecil County. He moved on to serve as a police officer with the University of Maryland Police Department and later as a fire investigator and inspector with the Office of the State Fire Marshal. Additionally, Strickland served a member of the State's first Hazardous Materials Response Team while serving with the OSFM.

From the late 1970's through 2004, Mr. Strickland was employed with the Maryland Fire and Rescue Institute at the University of Maryland where he served in a number of positions, and concluded his service with MFRI as Assistant Director. While serving as the Assistant Director of MFRI, Mr. Strickland was responsible for the day-to-day field operations of the state-level agency.

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In addition to his management responsibilities with MFRI, Mr. Strickland has served as an adjunct faculty member involved with classroom instruction of fire service and emergency service providers throughout the State of Maryland.

Prior to his appointment to the position of Manager of the Division of Emergency Operations, Strickland worked as a project manager with the Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory. During his tenure with APLJHU, Mr. Strickland's duties related to providing subject matter expertise in the areas of local, state, and federal Homeland Security and Emergency Management, to include concept and proposal development, research and development, project leadership, as well as liaison activity with local, state, and federal partners.

If confirmed by the County Council, Strickland will lead the Department of Emergency Services which was established pursuant to Executive Order 12-08 issued by County Executive Craig in December 2012 and became law February 17, 2013.

County Executive Craig established the new cabinet-level department following recommendations he received from the **Harford County Fire and EMS Master Plan**, commonly referred to as the **"Fire Study"** and the **Harford County Public Safety Commission**. Upon reviewing the recommendations to establish a Department of Emergency Services, the County Executive determined that it was in the best interest of the County government to restructure and redefine the system and the current Division of Emergency Operations to coordinate all aspects of the county emergency operations, duties and responsibilities in order to better delineate the functions of those operations and enhance available services to protect the public safety and welfare of the citizens.

As the Acting Director of the Department of Emergency Services, Mr. Strickland shall coordinate with and support the Harford County Volunteer Fire and Emergency Medical Services Association, Inc., on matters regarding fire and emergency medical services.

The newly created Department is responsible for the oversight of the affairs in providing a high quality of fire/rescue protection, prevention, suppression, training and quality assurance. Additionally the Department shall ensure a high quality in delivery of emergency medical services and training.

The Department shall also coordinate volunteer fire company government funding, support and coordination, as well as other aspects of emergency services.

Pursuant to the Order establishing the Department of Emergency Services, the Department shall not include any law enforcement agencies within Harford County.

